



(Photo by Spc. Chris McCann 2-10 Mtn. Public Affairs)

"What can make me feel this way...? My Girl!"

"The Temptations" - a group of Soldiers of Troop D, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) - perform a song and dance number at the Black History Month observance Feb. 17 at Camp Striker, Iraq. (See story page 2)

African-American History Celebrated

By Spc. L.B. Edgar,
7th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldiers gathered in the Division Chapel here to celebrate National African-American/Black History Month Feb. 15.

The event presented by the 1st Cavalry Division's Special Troops Battalion was

entitled "African-American/Black History Month Observance" and featured a variety of entertaining and educational poems, skits, dancing, music and speeches.

The observance, themed "From Slavery to Freedom: The Story of Africans in the Americas" was co-sponsored by the division's Equal Opportunity office.

The national anthem began the

evening's festivities and was followed by an invocation.

The Liberty Gospel Choir soulfully performed "Lift every voice and Sing" for the packed chapel of Soldiers in attendance. Some MND-B Soldiers acted out a comical, yet educational skit on African-American historical figures.

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Humor, history mix in Black History Month observance

By Spc. Chris McCann
2-10 Mtn. Public Affairs

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq - Many performers show support for the troops by playing concerts in various theaters of operation. But in celebration of Black History Month, Camp Striker, Iraq was treated to a show by a band that has been around since 1964.

"The Temptations" - actually a group of Soldiers of Troop D, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) - sang and danced in honor of the day, and Soldiers of that troop also re-enacted Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her bus seat and the assassination of Malcolm X.

The theme for the annual celebration this year was "From Slavery to Freedom: Africans in the Americas."

Command Sgt. Maj. Spencer Gray, a native of Thomaston, Ga., and the command sergeant major for the 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd BCT, was the keynote speaker at the celebration, and called to mind all those who have struggled for the rights of African Americans in the United States, including former presidents John F. Kennedy and Harry Truman.

"This celebration gives Soldiers the opportunity to celebrate African-American



(Photo by Spc. Chris McCann 2-10 Mtn. Public Affairs)

Pfc. Lorenzo Lyde (left) and Cpl. Brandon Cummings (right), lead Pfc. Jackie Jones (center), away during a re-enactment of Rosa Parks during the Black History Month celebration at Camp Striker, Iraq Feb. 17.

heritage month," he said. "This means a lot - even with the struggles of African-Americans, there are people without whom we couldn't have done it," he said, speaking of the strides made in equality. "Lincoln, Kennedy - everybody had a part of this just cause."

"The military has evolved greatly," Gray said, speaking of the desegregation after the American Civil War and the fact that black

Soldiers were often steered into support occupations, even until recently. "The mindset has changed now. In every branch, you have African Americans. ...We've been serving side-by-side with our majority counterparts in the U.S. military." He cautioned that African-American Soldiers cannot rest on what has been done before.

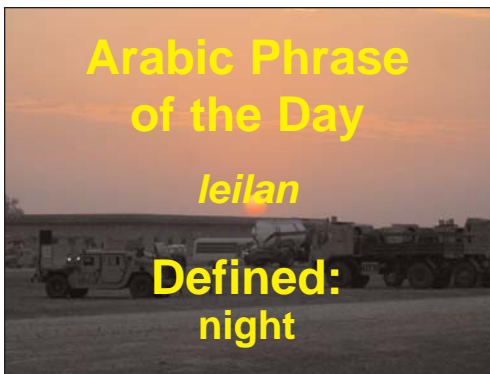
"Whatever took place in the past, it was a bad deal," he said. "But don't make that negativity a focus. We've got to push on, and it's okay to struggle."




Spc. Jenna Maravillas, a native of Lake in the Hills, Ill., and an information systems specialist for 2nd BCT, sang Mariah Carey's "A Hero Lives In You" as a tribute.

"I was asked to perform by Sgt 1st Class (Anthony) Drayton, the brigade's equal opportunity representative," said Maravillas. "I had wanted to sing it for the Fourth of July, so I brought it up to him and he said it would be nice as a dedication."

Staff Sgt. Nikkii Courtland, a native of Columbia, S.C. and a brigade aviation element noncommissioned officer in charge, commented on the importance of the observance.

"Black History Month is important, because it recognizes the accomplishments of African-Americans that are not duly noted in the history books. But it shouldn't just be a month - it should be every day."



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report			
	Today	Tomorrow	Friday
High: 64 Low: 53	High: 68 Low: 46	High: 71 Low: 47	

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"From Slavery to Freedom"

History

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One of the figures was African American poet Langston Hughes. Two poems by Hughes were recited, as well.

A group of Multi-National Corps - Iraq Soldiers from a traditionally African-American fraternity performed a spirited dance show that impressed the vocal crowd.

Then the keynote speaker took the floor and summarized the story of African Americans in U.S. history and



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar 7th MPAD)

Jackson, Miss., native Lt. Col. Angela Odom, commander, 15th PSB, 15th Sust. Bde., 13th Sust. Command (Expeditionary), speaks to Soldiers gathered during the "African-American/Black History Month Observance" for Multi-National Division-Baghdad inside the Division Chapel on Camp Liberty, Iraq Feb 15.

its armed forces.

"My perspective of this event is a synergy of Black History Month and an appreciation of African-American history in the military," said Lt. Col. Angela Odom, commander of 15th Personnel Services Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

Odom gave a historical account of how Africans were transported to America as an enslaved people in the 17th century.

"During the course of the slave trade, millions of Africans became involuntary immigrants to the New World," said the native of Jackson, Miss.

"When Thomas Jefferson penned the words, 'All men are created equal,' he could not have possibly envisioned how literally his own slaves and others would interpret his words," she said.

Not only did Odom recount the story of African Americans in the U.S., but she also highlighted the contributions of African Americans to the U.S. Armed Forces.

African Americans contribution to the U.S. military culminated with the ascension of a young U.S. Military Academy graduate, Roscoe Robinson Jr. When Robinson retired in 1985, he was the first African-American four-star general in U.S. history, Odom said.

"It took individual people digging down to find the strength to say this isn't right and we will never accept defeat," Odom said.

Odom pointed out that every African American in attendance and serving in support of the Global War On Terrorism was also a part of African American history.

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience," Odom quoted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to end her speech, "but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Baghdad in Brief

Soldiers Assist Victims of Suicide Bomb Attack


CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers assisted victims of a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device which exploded near the village of Muhammad Baqir, Iraq, injuring approximately 100 Iraqi civilians Feb. 20.

The attack took place in a busy part of the city where an insurgent bomber blew up his truck which held two chlorine tanks - a chemical used by terrorists with the intent to take out large numbers of civilians.


During the explosion, the tanks containing the chlorine separated from the vehicle. They did not explode, but leaked the gas.

Soldiers with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment and the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment provided medical assistance to the injured, and assisted in evacuating them to a medical clinic in the village.

The incident is currently under investigation.



**OPERATION IRAQI
FREEDOM**



SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

If each letter of the alphabet, a through z, is equal to a number 1 to 26

Then,

$K + N + O + W + L + E + D + G + E$
 $11 + 14 + 15 + 23 + 12 + 5 + 4 + 7 + 5 = 96\%$

$H + A + R + D + W + O + R + K$
 $8 + 1 + 18 + 4 + 23 + 15 + 18 + 11 = 98\%$

Both are important, but the total falls just short of 100%.

However,

$A + T + T + I + T + U + D + E$
 $1 + 20 + 20 + 9 + 20 + 21 + 4 + 5 = 100\%$

Safety really is about attitude

BE SAFE

MAKE IT HOME

Troopers learn to airlift equipment in combat

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
1-1 Cav. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - When people think of air assaults they may have an image in their mind of Soldiers repelling from helicopters down long ropes and then once on the ground, the Soldiers go to attack an objective.

But much of what the Army teaches about air assaults concerns the ability to airlift supplies, equipment and other re-supply items, getting them quickly to Soldiers in the combat zone.

This is the type of training that 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team Soldiers with Company A, 115th Brigade Support Battalion received here Feb. 16 as they sling loaded M-1114 up-armored humvees with the assistance of CH-47 Chinook helicopters from the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade.

"We did this in preparation

for further training events in which our Soldiers can train others in the brigade about high speed insertion (air assault) capabilities, adding just another facet to our capabilities," said Capt. John Jacques, the company commander and a native of West Islip, N.Y. "This will help our Soldiers as they learn how to get supplies quickly to an objective to include vehicles and equipment or whatever is necessary to complete the mission.

"They're also learning teamwork and gaining the confidence that they can accomplish anything tasked to them in support of combat operations," added Jacques whose troops often work escorting convoys and transporting supplies.

In preparation for the training airlift, Soldiers attached four large chains which are part of a large sling and attached them to shackles on the vehi-

cles.

Once the vehicles were in place on a helopad, the helicopter flew in and the Soldiers hooked the slings to the under belly of the aircraft. When the sling was secured to the hook on the helicopter, the Soldiers quickly moved away from the aircraft and the vehicle.

In the training, the helicopter crews airlifted the vehicles a short distance and then lowered the vehicles back to the ground, unhooking the sling and allowing time for other Soldiers to have the opportunity to take turns sling loading the vehicles.

According to 2nd Lt. Justin Bergen, a platoon leader with the company and a native of Centralia, Ill., oftentimes the purpose of rapid air insertion involves getting equipment to Soldiers in areas that have difficult terrain-terrain that makes it impossible to get equipment to troops via standard routes such as roads.

"This training gives us more skills, making us more flexible when we have to tackle some of the difficult logistical problems that often face troops in the combat zone," said Bergen.

Nearly two weeks ago, the Soldiers of Co. A took several hours of instruction, and trained using a 40-foot crane to simulate a helicopter lifting humvees and other supplies.

"For many of the Soldiers, this will be their first time working with a helicopter," said Jacques.

"This is very exciting and a great opportunity for the Soldiers to realistically practice what they've been trained," said Bergen. "Hopefully, this will inspire them to want to go to



Pfc. David Barkdoll, a petroleum supply specialist, with Company A, 115th Brigade Support Battalion prepares a sling Feb. 16 prior to sling load training Feb. 16 on Camp Taji, Iraq.

other professional military schools such as the air assault school or Pathfinders."

The Soldiers said the training was a worthwhile experience.

"It's an honor and a pleasure to learn something new and to be able to know how to do this," said Pfc. David Barkdoll of Co. A and a native of Atlanta, Ga. "If one of my fellow Soldiers is in desperate need of equipment in the combat zone, I know I'm trained and prepared to help him get that equipment quickly."

Barkdoll, whose military occupational specialty is that of a petroleum supply specialist, has spent his time in Iraq going on patrols and escorting convoys.

"It's exciting and pretty amazing when you see how close that helicopter gets to you," said Barkdoll of the day's training experience.



(Photos by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp 1-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Soldiers from Company A, 115th Brigade Support Battalion work to hook a sling onto a CH-47 Chinook helicopter which will airlift their humvee Feb. 16 during sling load training on Camp Taji, Iraq.

Counselors help Soldiers make sound decisions

By Pfc. Ben Fox
3-1 Cav. Public Affairs

BAQUBAH, Iraq - With an emphasis on troop increases and higher recruiting goals, Soldiers may get the impression that they are just numbers. In the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, the Soldiers are nowhere near numbers - they are Warriors.

"We don't see them as numbers," said Staff Sgt. Anna Conklin, the career counselor for 215th Brigade Support Battalion.

"We see them as a person and a Soldier," said the Santa Rita, Guam native.

As a career counselor, Conklin helps Soldiers plan for their futures, whether it is through re-enlistment or just advice.

Spc. Wesley Heine, Reconnaissance Security Detachment, is one of those Soldiers. He visited the retention office on Forward Operating Base Warhorse and met with Conklin.

"I wasn't planning on re-enlisting at all," said Heine, who later ended up raising his right hand and re-committing his service to our Nation.

Conklin said that the unit has a goal for retaining Soldiers, which is 80 percent of the eligible population.

"As of right now, we are where we need to be," she said. "We continuously retain quality Soldiers versus quantity."

Even with this goal, numbers are not



(Photo by Pfc. Ben Fox 3-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Raising their right hands, Soldiers of the 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division re-enlist in front of the American flag during a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Baqubah, Iraq.

what Conklin said she is concerned with, but rather the well being of the Soldiers who walk into her office.

"We will help you make a just decision," she said.

Heine went to Conklin just to see what his options were and he happened to mention Hawaii, he said.

Conklin told him that if Hawaii was what he wanted, she would do her best to get it for him, he said.

The decision to re-enlist is just as much

the Soldier's decision as it is the Soldier's family, because it affects them too, said Conklin. She advises Soldiers to talk the decision over with their loved ones back home, especially if it concerns money or movement.

"A Soldier is willing to commit as long as he has full support of his family," said Conklin.

Before making a decision, Heine was sure to speak with his wife about it, he said. She said she would love to move to Hawaii.

As a career counselor, Conklin does her best to meet the needs of her Soldiers.

"When Soldiers leave our office, they have a sense of security and have all of their questions answered," she said.

While deployed, many Soldiers don't have much time to think about re-enlistment.

Many of the Soldiers have their main concerns on getting home, said Conklin. Retention is sometimes put on the back burner in many Soldiers minds.

"We try to accommodate everybody because their schedules may vary," she said. "We will be here until midnight if we have to."

Heine said Conklin did her best to help him make his decision, but in the end, with his family's blessing, he re-enlisted because he loves his job and loves to serve his country.

"There is nothing like being in the military," said Heine. "You can't get another job like this."

